

Conjunctivitis

Conjunctivitis is a common eye infection in young children. Bacterial conjunctivitis, which is of most concern in the child care setting, occurs often in children under five years of age. Viral conjunctivitis is often found along with the common cold or other mild cold-like illnesses.

CAUSE: Bacteria, viruses, allergies, or chemicals

SYMPTOMS: Bacterial: Pink or red conjunctiva (lining of eyeball), white or yellow eye discharge (pus), often with matted eyelids after sleep, eye pain or eyelid redness.

Viral: Pink conjunctiva with a clear, watery eye discharge and without fever, eye pain or eye redness.

TRANSMISSION: Bacterial and viral infections can be spread by contact with the secretions from the eyes, nose, and mouth.

INCUBATION: It commonly takes 24 to 72 hours after exposure to bacterial or viral conjunctivitis for symptoms to begin.

CONTAGIOUS PERIOD: During the active phase of illness characterized by tearing and discharge.



EXCLUSION

For bacterial conjunctivitis with pus: exclude until the child has been examined by his/her physician, treated for 24 hours and the physician has approved readmission.

For other conjunctivitis without pus: no exclusion necessary.

Prevention & Control

1. Keep children's eyes wiped free of discharge. Avoid contact with eye drainage.
2. Dispose of contaminated tissues properly.
3. Frequent careful hand washing by child care staff, children and household members.

4. Clean and sanitize mouthed toys at least daily and when soiled. Try to prevent sharing of toys when conjunctivitis is present.



1. Bleach Disinfectant

- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup bleach in a gallon of water
 - 1 tablespoon bleach in a quart of water
- PREPARE FRESH SOLUTION DAILY.*

OR

2. Commercial disinfectant that is EPA approved
FOLLOW MANUFACTURER'S DIRECTIONS.

5. Diagnosis and Treatment: If your child has white or yellow eye drainage, discuss this fact sheet with their physician. She/he will decide whether the child needs antibiotic treatment (eye ointment or drops).

For more information, you or your physician may call the Central District Health Department at 385-5175, or call your local health department.